

Excavations

OSHA 29 CFR 1926 Subpart P



Before Digging

A “competent person” must:

- Contact utility company
- Ensure underground utilities are protected, supported, or removed
- Remove or secure any surface obstacles, such as trees, rocks, or sidewalks
- Classify the type of soil and rock deposits at the site, using visual and manual tests

Characteristics of a “Competent Person”

- Is trained in and capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards
- Is responsible for performing the soil classification analysis
- Has the authority to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate any hazards
- May be responsible for coordination and direction of emergency response
- Must inspect the excavation and adjacent areas at least once a day for possible cave-ins, failures of protective systems and equipment, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions

Safety

- Always wear the proper safety equipment required
- Know your company’s emergency response procedures
- Be sure proper air tests have been performed as necessary
- Keep materials and equipment that might fall into an excavation at least 2 feet from the edge
- Use warning barricades, hand or mechanical signals, or stop logs, to alert equipment operators of the edge of an excavation
- Be sure to have adequate protection from falling rock, soil, or other materials and equipment
- Do not work in excavations where water has accumulated unless adequate precautions have been taken

Types of Protective Support Systems

- Sloping and/or benching of the sides of the excavation
- Supporting the sides of the excavation with timber shoring or aluminum hydraulic shoring
- Placing a shield between the sides of the excavation and your work area

★ An exit must be provided if the excavation is four feet deep or greater. The exit must be within 25 feet of every worker.

★ A protective system is not needed if the excavation is less than 5 feet deep, providing there is no indication of a potential cave-in.

